American Indian Sign Language (AISL) Digital Corpus Project
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Why study PISL?

• PISL has been long overlooked, understudied, and considered by many a primitive, emblematic, or dying language.
• Researchers who have studied it have focused on the alternative (a/b) role of signing among male hearing community members only.
• Our research focuses on both alternative and primary acquisition patterns among deaf and hearing community members.

Futhermore...
PISL offers insights about signed and spoken language contact; multilingualism and code-switching; the conveyance of human language in signed and spoken modalities; the interrelatedness and distinctiveness of speech, sign, and gesture; and also informs theories of language acquisition, contact, and change.

Eudico Linguistic Annotator (ELAN)

ELAN is a tool for the creation of complex annotations on video/audio resources using captions, voice-over, slow motion, and annotations. Objective: to train Deaf and American Indian students and linguistics students to use ELAN for the transcription, translation, and annotation of signed and spoken languages.

James Wooden Legs
Northern Cheyenne [Tse’ tsehestahese]

Presenter's Sample Bibliography and Research Website


Research Website: http://pislresearch.com/

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2009 – 2014 Documentary Linguistic Fieldwork

We have filmed more than twenty-five signers from among the Crow [Apsáalooke], Assiniboine [Aanimînî], Nakoda and Lakȟóta [Tetoneanimîn], Northern Cheyenne [A’aniinen], Aapátohspikani [Northern Piegans], Nakoa [Blood], and Siksika [Alberta, Canada Blackfoot]. Native collaborators have informed us that they know of hundreds of additional signers.

Project Objectives

• Conducting preliminary linguistic analyses to determine phonological parameters, morpho-syntactic underpinnings, semantic properties, and discourse features.
• Integrating these findings into the digital archive of American Indian Sign Language documentary materials.
• Making this important yet often overlooked part of American Indian linguistic and cultural heritage accessible to broader audiences and Native communities where indigenous sign language once thrived.